



# Center FOR Christian Virtue

*Public Policy. Engagement. Education.*

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Lang, Ranking Member Craig, and esteemed members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in **support** of Senate Bill 167, also known as the *App Store Accountability Act*. My name is Ryan Folz, and I serve as the Legislative Liaison for the Center for Christian Virtue, Ohio's largest Christian Public Policy organization.

Across our country, it's widely understood that minors cannot and should not enter into contracts, let alone without parental consent. Yet every day, they do so by downloading apps and clicking "I agree" to the terms and conditions. These agreements often grant developers access to location data, contacts, photos, and even messages which exposes minors to exploitation, targeted ads, and psychological harm. Most parents remain unaware of the content and data extraction their children are exposed to through these apps, and with the average youth using around 40 different apps per week, there is a clear need for change.<sup>1</sup>

By instituting greater transparency, guardrails, and parental consent through this bill, minors' exposure to inappropriate content and the collection and monetization of their personal data would drop significantly. Senate Bill 167 accomplishes what is needed by addressing the gaps currently found in our tech landscape. Ohio made similar strides in regulating some of this behavior through efforts like the Social Media Parental Notification Act of 2023, but unfortunately, the bill failed on constitutional grounds.

The App Store Accountability Act is not a matter of free speech restriction, but one of contract law, consumer protection, and the regulation of deceptive trade practices. By focusing on contract law and not content, SB167 would steer clear of any constitutional barriers. If passed, these new rules would require more accurate and transparent age ratings and app descriptions; it would mandate parental consent through detailed disclosures before a minor can download apps or make purchases; it would correctly place more responsibility on the app store; and it is designed to cause minimal disruption for everyday adults. App store providers like Apple and Google already collect much of the information needed for these requirements, and the countless apps available for download appear through their app stores.

Because of this, app store providers are the logical choice for verifying ages and ensuring developers and the apps they create are in compliance.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.michiganmedicine.org/health-lab/study-average-teen-received-more-200-app-notification-s-day#:~:text=TikTok%20and%20YouTube%20are%20among,mobile%20gaming%20\(11%25.\)](https://www.michiganmedicine.org/health-lab/study-average-teen-received-more-200-app-notification-s-day#:~:text=TikTok%20and%20YouTube%20are%20among,mobile%20gaming%20(11%25.))



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SB167 is Ohio's best option for protecting its minors online. By passing the App Store Accountability Act, Ohio has the chance to be among the leading states that have taken this critical step in protecting our children online. This bill is not anti free speech or anti-innovation, it is pro-consumer and pro-family. The bill ensures parental authority is respected in our state and leaves a child's parent—not a distant corporation—responsible for making decisions regarding their child's privacy, their data, and ultimately, their well-being.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak on this important and needed bill. I'd be happy to answer any questions.